



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

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WILDLIFE WORTH MILLIONS IN COLD CASH EACH YEAR AND WORTH SAVING

Wild birds and mammals inhabiting the forests, fields, and streams are worth millions of dollars annually on a cash basis aside from their esthetic value, the Bureau of Biological Survey pointed out today in a report to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes.

The report, written by W. L. McAtee, technical adviser to the Chief of the Biological Survey, was issued as a mimeographed leaflet, BS-160, entitled "Wildlife in Land Planning," which is available to the public upon request.

Hunters have spent as much as \$150,000,000 annually in the pursuit of game, Mr. McAtee states. He adds that these figures are conservative. Crediting only a tenth of the expenditures of tourists to the drawing powers of wildlife yields even a larger sum. Taking into consideration the amounts spent for license fees, transportation, arms, ammunition, food, lodging, and other items, the Biological Survey expert asserts that wildlife is worth some hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

Recognition of the economic importance of wildlife has had its most widespread expression in legislation. Every State has passed laws regulating the taking of game. Such laws provide an undisturbed breeding season for many species and give as much additional protection as may be required to safeguard

the animal populations from undue depletion. When the laws are properly designed and enforced, continuation of the direct and recreational values of wildlife to the States is assured.

Declaring that protection alone has been insufficient to prevent the reduction in numbers of some forms of wildlife, the Survey's technical adviser points out that increases in the human population have been partly responsible for the diminution of animal populations. The number of hunters increased faster than compensating laws were passed, he explained. Increasing human occupation of land formerly occupied by wildlife was another unfavorable factor.

Attempts to reclaim and cultivate marginal lands by drainage and other practices were harmful to wildlife and proved disastrous to most of the farmers who attempted to make a living from these areas.

To undo the damage of past years, McAtee advises that as much as practicable of the environment be restored. Intelligent land planning and land management may restore the original state of land and the wildlife.

"Land planning must consider wildlife and proceed with the full realization that wildlife itself can be treated as a crop," he asserts. "In action this process is the art of wildlife management." He declares that protection of muskrat marshes and regulated trapping, for example, have yielded acreage incomes as great or greater than that of nearby agricultural lands.

In any event, he concludes, values or potentialities of value exist for every tract of land on which wildlife can live and be controlled, and intelligent management will make the most of them.